

[For the Eastern Tobacco Journal.]

Eastern North Carolina as a Tobacco Section.

Fifteen years ago the vast and fertile fields of the tide-water belt of North Carolina were considered of little value except for the cultivation of cotton, corn and rice as the staple crops. Little did our friends and neighbors of the then thrifty and prosperous middle-belt, think that within the next decade the so-called sand beds of Eastern North Carolina would out-class them in the production of the golden weed. Little did they dream that down here within the sound of old ocean's roar, almost upon the shoals washed by the waves of the deep blue sea, a tobacco superior in fineness of texture, richness of flavor, and beauty of color could be successfully and profitably grown.

When the experiment was first made, many there were right here in our midst, who shook their heads dubiously when asked their opinion of the new departure from the old line products.

Many older people could testify that what they called "jam of de fence" had been planted and matured, but an acre of tobacco at these times would have supplied a whole township, as the only use to which it was applied was for home consumption. I well remember, in 1878, my father planted about twenty yards square in tobacco, for smoking tobacco. He obtained the seed from Mr. John E. Koonce, now living, I understand, in Lenoir county, but who at the time was employed by my father. He called the tobacco "bull tongue," and when it was cured, by air of course, it was very strong smoking tobacco. This tobacco grew luxuriantly. I remember hearing my father remark that he thought his land would produce tobacco. I have thus slightly digressed in order to show that a good many years before tobacco was grown in the East as a money crop, the idea was slowly gaining that tobacco could be made a profitable crop, and what is very surprising to me is that these little patches in different parts of the country,